

WAKEFIELDS HONORED AT TOLL HOUSE

When Ruth and Kenneth Wakefield of Duxbury owned the famed Toll House in Whitman, they welcomed such guests as Duncan Hines, Ernie Pyle, Ambassador Joseph Kennedy and his family, including Jack Kennedy when he was a U.S. Senator.

The Wakefields sold the Toll House in 1970, long since the last carriage had stopped for food, a change of horses and the toll at the midway point on the road between Boston and New Bedford.

On the evening of June 26, the Wakefields were guests of honor when the restaurant previewed its June 27 reopening. At this preview were 300 friends and relatives of the new owner, Frank Saccone. It was a festive occasion highlighted by the presentation of a candle-lit cake given to the Wakefields in observance of their 47th wedding anniversary.

For three years before last week's reopening, the restaurant once acclaimed as one of the best ten in the U.S., had remained shuttered and in

a sad state of disrepair on its corner at Routes 18 and 14. "It's like coming back home," said cook George Boucher of Raynham, who after 3 years elsewhere has resumed his duties as chef in the Toll House kitchen, as he had done for 33 years. The Toll House achieved its greatest renown during the ownership by the Wakefields from 1930 to 1967. During this period they increased accommodations from 35 to almost 400, enhancing its repute through the best-selling Toll House Cookbook. The author was Ruth Wakefield, who also originated Toll House Cookies which GIs remember receiving during World War II.

"We had 38 years of it," said Ken Wakefield, "including Sundays, holidays and Christmas. It was kind of nice to get out. But I tell you, we have missed the older employees and friends we made from across the country."

The Wakefields sold the restaurant to Richard Noel and Noel, Inc., who after trying to establish a nightclub, closed the restaurant in 1970.

Mr. Saccone, a Brockton public accountant who owns Hoppy's Oil, Inc., paid \$150,000 for the establishment and planned to spend \$300,000 for renovations.

Mrs. Wakefield noted that the owners had cut no corners. "It's just so beautiful."

"We tried to keep the same old flavor and feeling as it was when the Wakefields had it," said decorator Dorothy Appleton of Hanson. She said the "primitive style" of the decor

under the Wakefields had been replaced by "heavier-handed" decoration. "It's what people expect in this day and age," she said. "We're in a decorative era."

In the Garden Room which was built around a giant elm during the Wakefield era, there is in its place a rain curtain of water trickling down wires, producing a shimmering, fountain effect.

Supervising the huge kitchen is the owner's brother, William Saccone, who, until 8 months ago owned Saccone's Restaurant in Atlanta, Georgia. He said the new Toll House, with its two private dining rooms, could seat up to 800 in one sitting.

The fare on "Wakefield Night" included shrimp remoulade as an appetizer, prime rib, baked potato and Peach Melba.

Chef Saccone brought with him from Atlanta his hostess, Jackie Carmichael, complete with a Southern drawl. "I love

it here," she said of her new home.

Sitting at the head table with the Wakefields were Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kent, Miss Ann Fitzgibbons and her aunt, Miss Agnes Fitzgibbons of Whitman, Mr. and Mrs. John Cutler, and Miss Ellen Stillman of Plympton. Don Kent, who had to leave for an 11 p.m. weathercast, said "I hope you have a pleasant day tomorrow, but I can't guarantee it."

Yes, Don, it rained. All day.

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